

September 1984

The 'Adjustment Disorder':

A True-to-Life Adventure Story

The following is written by Sheila Thompson, who was awarded the 1984 Robin Wiehm Award from the Center for Women's Studies for this paper. The Robin Wiehm Award is presented annually for the outstanding paper submitted by an undergraduate in a Women's Studies class. It is named posthumously for Robin Wiehm, a student in the first women's studies courses offered at Ohio State.

Doing the paperwork is easy enough. I only have to copy the doctors' orders onto the medication charts: scheduled drugs on the front and p.r.n. doses on the back. On the psychiatric ward where I work, that means anti-depressants, anti-psychotics, and sedatives at regular intervals, then maybe some more if those didn't work the first time. Most of our patients are women; that's a fact. They stay a few days to a few months, depending on their insurance coverage or family income. If a woman comes in on welfare, she is discharged sooner than the others -- always with her bottle of pills to keep her sane. It is true we've had people overdose themselves as soon as they've been released. Most of the women on this unit are here for depression.

"9:15 am. Sonya R., white married female, stated age 22, is agitated today. Pacing hall, crying, stream of consciousness verbosity concerning husband coming back to 'do it again.' Wants to see her baby. Very paranoid, nervous behavior. Possible auditory hallucinations. Debbie M. administered 5mg. Haldol for agitation, returned patient to room. Will cancel psych testing for today." I put Sonya's chart

down and recorded her drug intake on my medication billing sheet. The same age as myself, Sonya had been 'allegedly' raped repeatedly by her father, brother, uncle, and now her husband of five years. Even though two convictions had already been handed down to her brother and uncle, it was still 'alleged' in the watchful eyes of the staff. Sonya now exhibits an 'adjustment disorder mixed with paranoia.' She needs to go to group therapy and individual psychotherapy to help her go back to her husband and resume normal sexual relations with him. No one has charged Mr. Sonya R. with rape since psychiatric patients cannot press charges. Sonya misses her three year old daughter but does not want to go back to her husband. We, the supportive staff, are helping her to return.

My eyes cannot meet Sonya's soporific stare.

In the nurses station, Debbie is chatting about her newly wedded husband's job as a defense lawyer. Mary, the blood drawer, is passing around an order list for holiday chocolates. She explains to us she is helping her son sell these for a school project. Initially it was his responsibility, but now it seems he can't find the time to sell orders. Mary works full time and is a single mother. We look over the glossy pictures -- life size mints, chocolate covered nuts, cherries, the works. Being hypoglycemic, I have self preservation in mind and wistfully push the ad back to the center of the table. Patients' charts are also scattered around us; so many decisions to make. Most of the patients are in their therapies and the rest are subdued in their rooms.

Debbie continues to laud her new spouse. "Oh, you guys, my husband told me the most interesting story this morning. His job is so exciting you know, and here I am, just this stupid little nurse."

For a moment I glance down at her identification tag. I suddenly realize she has changed her last name to her husband's since her marriage. I am disturbed but politely continue to listen, commenting nothing.

"Well, anyway, he was telling me about this rape case where it was pretty obvious that a rape had occurred, you know, they had found bruises and semen and everything. And the guy had pretty much admitted to the whole thing, but you know what happened? This is just amazing, you guys."

Debbie likes to tell stories. Yesterday she told us, in the same excited high pitched voice, about the car wreck her husband was in recently. Fortunately, he escaped injury but the other driver is now in the hospital.

Barb, a nurse's aid, orders two boxes of mints while carefully listening to Debbie's story. Her eyes are fixed on Debbie's animated gestures.

"Well, even though a rape had occurred, the judge, and I can't tell you this guy's name because my husband made me promise, decided that he wasn't guilty. See, when the guy accused of rape met this woman, she wasn't wearing a bra. Oh yeah, you guys, she was fully dressed, they were at some social engagement, but she just wasn't wearing a bra underneath her shirt. So the judge said she should have known that would keep him from controlling himself and he was just reacting to this stimulus. So really it was her fault. Isn't that just something?"

I am unbelieving, my mouth hanging open but silent. The woman's fault. The woman's fault. Images of my own rape of soul, of body, of self flooding back to me like angry tears flowing over bruises of guilt, of shame. Mother telling me you slut, it was your own fault, what were you doing there anyway? Male gynecologist peering over my d/raped body, telling me you don't seem to be internally injured, are you sure you were raped? Female lover and best friend hanging up on me angrily, I think you could have prevented it, I think you asked for it. And now this woman and the judge. Her fault. Her fault.

Other women present, mildly amused at Debbie's little tidbit, react appropriately.

"Oh yeah, that's awful, but what can you do?" Karen sighs, absentmindedly inspecting her fingernails. She is doing graduate work in counseling. The candy order form makes its way into her hands. She studies it with much interest.

Mary offers, "I don't have to worry about rape. I have my boyfriend to take of that." I look at her ... is she joking?? Mary watches Karen add her name to the order list, pleased. I am still wondering what Mary meant by that, but do not have the courage to ask.

Barb, looking vaguely disturbed, comments quietly, "When I was younger, about eight years old, my uncle raped me. My family was very embarrassed but didn't really do anything about it. But I've never trusted men since. I still think about it sometimes." She looks to us for our reaction.

A pregnant pause. We all look to each other, but not at Barb. What to say? Barb, after realizing no one is going to acknowledge her pain, becomes quiet and avoids our eyes. I want to reach over and touch her aging hand but do not, thinking it would seem too superficial, too congruent with the tone of conversation until now. I wince in my own discomfort.

"Well, it's happened to me, too. This guy wanted me to suck him off, but when I refused, he stuffed tuna salad into my mouth and nose until I thought I was going to suffocate!" Though Karen was not smiling, her experience brings choked giggles from some of the women. Embarrassed, Karen begins to laugh haltingly along with them, but cannot continue, remembering. By laughing at this horrific tale, the women have brought the conversation back to the small talk level. Invalidation. Karen looks to Barb for support, but Barb is dejectedly busying herself in paperwork. She cannot give the same support she did not receive.

Debbie becomes absorbed in the chocolate orders, deciding to change the subject by discussing the variety of candy with Mary.

Karen turns to stare at me. "Did something happen to you, too, Sheila? You have a funny look on your face."

I am caught off guard. My breath is caught in indecision. Voices calling -- tell her, tell her, she is also a victim, don't let her be alone. Risk the exposure. But I am hesitating.

Sonya, the rape victim patient, wanders toward the nursing station, tearful. The

Haldol Debbie gave her earlier should have taken effect by now. She interrupts Debbie's chocolate decision to tell her that she is still hearing her husband say he'll do it again when she comes home from the crazy house. Debbie quickly resumes her professional posture and tells Sonya not now, go back and lie down in your room, it will be okay. Sonya cries harder. Agitated, Debbie gets up to personally escort Sonya back to her room.

Anger. I am angry for Sonya, and Barb, for Karen, for the woman without a bra; I am angry for me. Why are we denying this pain in ourselves and others in the name of social acceptability? Why won't we handle anything beyond the artificial gestures of everyday life? Why, when we feel it more intensely than others, are we, like Sonya, labeled and filed away?

Karen is still waiting for an answer. Barb has overheard the question and silently watches, eyes darting from me to paperwork and back again, waiting. I make my decision. Drawing a deep breath I tell Karen yes, yes I also have felt the pain, the humiliation, the guilt. How I wanted to castrate every rapist on this earth. How I am still scared sometimes of the dark or of sudden noises. How three men raped me when I was seventeen and a virgin, just graduated from high school. How I will never never forget.

She listens thoughtfully and then asks questions, eyebrow raised. Questions that sound too much like the textbook counseling methods she is studying, but I answer nonetheless, thinking myself to be supportive or maybe even enlightening for her.

Barb now openly watches the exchange between us, forgetting herself.

I need to have the feeling that Karen cares, that we can reach beyond the facade of trivial conversation, easily started and easily forgotten. I am thinking maybe this is a start, something, however upsetting, of a trusting friendship between us. Something to help me respect myself in this job I am so uncomfortable with sometimes. I am so wrapped up in these feelings I do not notice Debbie returning to the nurses station.

As soon as Debbie is seated, Karen demands her attention. Leaning towards Debbie, she instigates: "Debbie, guess what?! Sheila was raped by three men when she was seventeen!"

Debbie gasps, "Really! Oh, Sheila, tell me about it!" Her face is wide eyed with a perverse delight. Another story to tell at dinner when her husband gets home from his

exciting job as defense lawyer. The cycle repeats.

I slump back in my chair, acutely violated and disillusioned. After waiting several moments without receiving a reply from me, Karen decides to tell my story to Debbie in her own words. I only hear bits and pieces as I am staring at the nearly filled candy order form. Wanting to reward myself for being so naive and trusting, I decide the chocolate covered cashews don't look so bad and put myself down for a box. My hypoglycemic body won't mind the drastic drop in blood sugar level if I eat the entire box full, only I will. The staff are still chatting over my 'unfortunate experience.' I look up, Barb is empathetically watching my eyes.

We look into each other's faces for a long time, both understanding, both acknowledging. Now it has happened to both of us. We tune out the chatter from the other women and gradually return sad smiles to each other. The moment of silent communication passes. We slowly draw away from each other, carefully, soothingly, comfortably, and return to our work.

I glance down and realize I still hadn't billed Sonya R for her p.r.n. Haldol. Today I let her sleep for free. I bill the psychiatric unit instead.

Sheila Thompson

From the Director

Welcome back for the new academic year! I write this, of course, in August, before I have officially arrived back on duty after a six-month research leave, so I can't say with much authority what will be "happening" in Women's Studies this year. I'll need a couple of weeks to figure that out. But I want to take this opportunity to indicate how pleased I am that my presence in the office has not in the least been indispensable, and to say a special thanks to Verta Taylor, who served as Acting Director during my absence, and to Suzanne Hyers, Susan Moseley-Haught, and Mary Sullivan (as well as Susann Rivera and Grace Moran), all of whom worked very hard, protected my time away, and did a superb job of keeping the office and the program functioning at its usual level of excellence. I accomplished a great deal of work while I was gone, and I feel particularly fortunate to have such a reliable and imaginative staff. And: a very profound debt of gratitude to Vivian Schaefer, who worked as my research assistant this summer and did a superb job. Without her help, I could not have come nearly

as close as I did to finishing the project I'm working on.

As I hope everyone knows by now, we have added four new faculty on joint appointments beginning this fall: Kristine Dugas, Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and English; Judith Johnson, Instructor of Women's Studies and English, who will also be working on a special project coordinating women's studies courses at OSU branch campuses; Judith Mayne, Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Romance Languages and Literatures (she gets the prize for the longest official title); and Claire Robertson, Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and History. I am also pleased to welcome to the staff Terry Moore, graduate student in English, who will be editor of the Sojourner beginning with the October issue. Each brings unique talents to the program, and we are all looking forward to working with them.

I've enjoyed the time "off," but I am genuinely glad to be coming back. I see that no one has yet installed a window in my office (I keep hoping for miracles), but I hadn't realized how much I missed my portrait of Virginia Woolf.

I wish all our readers a productive year!

Marlene Longenecker

Coalition to Stop Violence Against Black Women

The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Black Women has been organized in response to two recent homicides of Columbus women. The Coalition takes particular note of the treatment these homicides received in the press:

On April 2, the Columbus Dispatch carried an 18-line story on the fourth page of Section B reporting the discovery of the body of 28-year-old Gwendolyn Walker who had been found badly beaten to death and left in Blendon Woods Metro Park. On April 3, on page 5 of Section D, the Dispatch's follow-up story reported that she had been strangled, not beaten to death.

On July 31, the Columbus Dispatch reported that the severely beaten body found on July 30 had been identified as that of 23-year-old Genice Cross. This story was carried on the first page of Section C.

As stated by White Women Against Racism in their letter to the editor in the July issue of the Columbus Free Press: "Why is it when women of color (...) are murdered a short article may appear in the back section of the Dispatch? Why is it that when middle-class

white women, like Jean Shrader, suffer a similar fate, banner headlines and public outrage prevail."

The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Black Women hopes to learn the answer to these questions. They hope, too, to learn if this disregard is in any way reflective of the manner in which the police investigations of these homicides are being handled. Members of the Coalition have met with Jerry Hammond, President of the Columbus City Council, and with Dwight Joseph, Chief of Police for the City of Columbus, to voice their concerns and to gather information which is currently not available in the press but which, if so, might be important in preventing such crimes in the future. Coalition members also plan to meet with Luke Feck, editor of the Columbus Dispatch, to inquire about the treatment of these news reports.

The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Black Women is comprised of interested individuals as well as representatives of various organizations such as Sisters in Solidarity, White Women Against Racism, Women Against Rape, the Columbus Free Press, OSU Women's Studies and Women's Services, and others. If you are interested in working with the Coalition or if your organization can donate materials (xeroxing, mimeoing, postage, etc.), please contact the Center for Women's Studies at 207 Dulles Hall, or call 422-1021.

University Gallery: Art and Social Conscious

The University Gallery of Fine Art will present ART AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUS, a series of exhibitions and related events dealing with contemporary topics of concern and how the individual artist can contribute and clarify social and political responses to those concerns.

From September 19 through October 10, in the Hoyt L. Sherman Gallery in Sullivant Hall, the University Gallery presents EL SALVADOR: THE WORK OF 30 PHOTOGRAPHERS featuring photographs by internationally-known photojournalists made while on assignment for Time, Life, Paris Match, Newsweek and Stern. Included in this exhibition is work by exhibition co-editor Susan Meiselas. Meiselas, author of Nicaragua, is widely recognized as the foremost photojournalist working in Latin America today.

In relation to the El Salvador exhibit, Public Programs will present FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE: CENTRAL AMERICA on Tuesday, October 25, 7:30 pm, Hoyt L. Sherman Gallery, Sullivant Hall; admission is \$2.50/\$2.00 students, seniors, and the unemployed. This evening of video journalism brings together the best of recent coverage, shot on location,

of El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, and Nicaragua. Included in this offering is the work of producer Joan Braderman whose *WAITING FOR THE INVASION: U.S. CITIZENS IN NICARAGUA* (excerpted in *FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE*) was nationally televised on PBS and received the Global Village award for Best Documentary.

For additional information about these and other presentations of the Public Programs series, contact Nancy Robinson, Director of Programming, Public Programs, University Gallery of Fine Art, or call 422-0330.

Attention Sojourner Readers

This is to remind you to renew your subscription for the Sojourner for 1984-85. Each year, all persons who were on our mailing list the previous year receive the September issue regardless of whether they renew their subscriptions. However, we can only afford to do this for one month. So, if you have not yet sent in your 1984-85 subscription, this will be your last issue of the Sojourner.

The price is \$3.00 for 10 issues; the subscription form is on the back of this (and all) issue(s). And, please let us know if you have a change of address.

Finally, we encourage all of our readers to send us original articles, news items, information you believe would be of interest to other readers, and letters to the editor. Please send materials to The Sojourner, 207 Dulles Hall, 230 West 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Cheryl Pentella, assistant editor of OnCampus, who gave birth to Alex Rose Santer on August 9, 1984. Only one week earlier, Cheryl actively participated in a videotaped workshop of the Rape Education and Prevention Project, which emphasized the need for all women to become informed and aware. We appreciate Cheryl's support of this and other projects involving women's issues and concerns, and we wish her and her family well.

Research Assistant Needed

Roberta Sands, Assistant Professor of Social Work, is looking for an undergraduate or graduate student in Social Work or Women's Studies to gather information and data on abortions in Ohio in cooperation with the Ohio Family Planning Association. Independent studies course credit will be offered to interested students during Autumn Quarter, 1984.

For more information, contact Dr. Sands at 422-8879 or 486-4767.

Colloquia Scheduled

The Center for Women's Studies will sponsor two presentations during Autumn Quarter as part of our 1984-85 Colloquium Series.

Clyde Franklin, Professor of Sociology and author of The Changing Definitions of Masculinity, will speak on "Changing Men in Today's Society." The colloquium will be in room 056 University Hall on Thursday, October 11, at 4:00 pm.

Claire Robertson, Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and History, will speak on Tuesday, November 6, at 12:00 noon. Her topic will be "Issues in African Women's History." (The location will be announced in the October Sojourner.)

Everyone is welcome. If you would like additional information, please contact the Center for Women's Studies at 207 Dulles Hall or call 422-1021.

Women's Studies at Newark

Judith Johnson, Instructor of English and Women's Studies, will teach Women's Studies 201, "Introduction to Women's Studies in the Humanities," everyday at 11:00 am on the Newark Campus for Autumn Quarter, 1984. Judy will also begin work on a project to further the establishment of women's studies courses and related programming on the four OSU regional campuses.

The Center for Women's Studies is pleased to finally formalize Judy's joint appointment (she has been teaching women's studies at both Newark and Columbus campuses for a few years), and we look forward to working with her in the future.

INTREPID

Intrepid is a new national resource project to prevent violence against women. The name, "Intrepid," summons a vision of women confronting danger with determination and using our strength to make social changes that will end violence. The Intrepid project exists to explore and provide ways to use theory, strategies, and social action tools to promote and support positive, creative social change that increases women's safety.

Intrepid can provide the following prevention services: consulting and training services; public speaking; prevention research; development of new resources and curriculum materials; publication and distribution of prevention materials; and a national information bank and referral network of resource people and organizations engaged in prevention activities.

Persons can participate in Intrepid by listing services' or organizations' prevention activities in the national information bank and referral network, which can help bring

people and information together.

Intrepid has two offices. The National Office in Bethesda, Maryland, handles the information bank and referral network as well as requests for consulting, training, and public speaking. The director has extensive experience in developing educational workshops for universities, mental health centers, businesses, schools, and community organizations. The Clearinghouse in Columbus, Ohio is the center for publishing and distributing prevention materials. The goal of the Clearinghouse is to keep social change materials available to the public. Persons are welcome to submit materials to the director for consideration.

Many of the publications available from the Clearinghouse were developed by Columbus organizations which have attained national status as being leaders in their fields: Columbus Women Against Rape, Community Action Strategies to Stop Rape, The Child Assault Prevention Project, and the National Self-Defense Teaching Practicum (held in Columbus in 1983).

For complete information, please write to: Intrepid National Office, PO Box 30563, Bethesda, Maryland 20814.

Twin Oaks Community

Twin Oaks Community is a secular alternative society being built by women in Louisa, Virginia. It is currently comprised of 70 adults and 17 children. On 400 acres of land there are 5 residences, a children's building, a 3000 sq. ft. industrial building, a full auto and machine shop, and light industrial facilities. Their wood and rope furniture business and their indexing collective are the main sources of income. Buildings are heated by wood and solar energy systems.

Since 1967, feminism, equality, non-violence, and cooperation have been the community's main values. It is a place for women and men to live without much of the stereotyping common in today's society. Domestic responsibilities are shared by members of the community, and technical, skilled, and manual work are accessible to all.

Twin Oaks is an exciting cultural, social, and political experiment with much to offer and is extending to others the opportunity to visit their community. If you would like to arrange a visit, write to Outreach, Twin Oaks Community, Route 4, Box 169, Louisa, Virginia 23093.

CONFERENCES Mid-Atlantic NWSA

The Mid-Atlantic Women's Studies Association of the National Women's Studies Association will sponsor a conference at La Salle College in Philadelphia on October 13-14, 1984. The conference, "Reviewing Our Past/Charting Our Future: Fifteen Years of Feminist Study and Action," will focus on the recent history, present condition, and potential future of women's studies in the United States. It will include an investigation of the impact of fifteen years of women's studies activism on academic disciplines, communities, institutions, and everyday lives. Special attention will be paid to exploring how our varied racial, economic, and sexual situations have shaped conceptions of scholarly and political questions.

For registration materials and/or additional information, contact: Musil/Dallery/Millard, Women's Studies, LaSalle College, Philadelphia, PA 19141.

Anorexia and Bulimia: "Why Women?"

The Center for the Study of Anorexia and Bulimia has announced its Third Annual Conference to be held in New York City at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel on November 17-18, 1984. The Conference will explore the question, "Why Women?" and will investigate new research in the field of women's psychology which may provide new approaches and tools for the treatment of eating disorders.

Focusing on the fact that an estimated 95% of the patients in treatment for these eating disorders are women, the conference will feature a major presentation by Harvard psychologist Carol Gilligan, author of *In A Different Voice* and one of the leaders in the study of developmental psychology.

Registration information for the conference is available from The Center for the Study of Anorexia and Bulimia, 1 West 91st Street, New York, NY 10024.

Women and Healthy Lifestyles

The Ohio State University Center for Nursing Research will sponsor the Second Biennial Conference on Women's Health on November 8 and 9, 1984. The Program, "Responsible Caring: Women and Healthy Lifestyles," will address such issues as practical aspects of exercise and fitness, the psychological impact of menstrual cycles, careers, marriage, parenting, and midlife challenges. Conference

sponsors hope to encourage participation from all women, not only those in the health professions.

The conference will feature a free public address on November 8 at 7:30 pm by Nancy Fugate Woods, co-author of The Complete Book of Women's Health and Health Care of Women.

Conference fee will be \$30 for the entire program or \$15 to attend the afternoon sessions. For additional information and to obtain brochures, write to D.J. Lafferre, Center for Nursing Research, 1585 Neil Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210 or call (614) 422-3943.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Harvard University Divinity School

Harvard Divinity School announces five full-time positions for 1985-86 as Research Associate and Visiting Lecturer in its Women's Studies in Religion Program. The Program supports significant women's studies research projects on topics related to the history and function of gender in the symbolization of religious traditions, the institutionalization of roles in religious communities, and the interaction between religion and the personal, social, and cultural condition of women.

Research Associates are required to be in full-time residence at Harvard Divinity School while carrying out their proposed research projects during the 1985-86 academic year. Each teaches a semester course related to her/his research.

Research Associate positions are open to candidates with doctorates in the fields of religion, to those with primary competence in other fields of the humanities and the social sciences who have a serious investment in religion, and to leading religion professionals with equivalent achievements.

Associates will receive a salary of \$20,800 and benefits for a full-time appointment extending from September 1, 1985 through June 30, 1986.

For application materials and additional information, contact Constance H. Buchanan, Director of Women's Programs, Harvard Divinity School, 45 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

CALLS FOR PAPERS NWSA '85

The Seventh Annual National Women's Studies Association Convention will be held June 19-23, 1985, at the University of Washington. Interested persons are encouraged to submit proposals in the following areas: Feminist Education; The Arts from a Feminist

Perspective; Feminist Research in the Humanities; Feminist Research in the Social Sciences; Feminist Research in the Natural Sciences; and Feminist Practice and Theory. NWSA '85 will also include a Plenary Session and workshops on and about poor and working class women, both white and of color, and proposals are particularly sought in these areas.

Persons may submit a single paper for inclusion in sessions which will be arranged, or may submit a complete session proposal. All proposals will be submitted to a blind review, and presenters must be NWSA members.

Conference Announcements and Calls for Papers are available in the Center for Women's Studies, 207 Dulles Hall (supply limited). For additional information, contact: Sydney Kaplan, Director, Women's Studies Program, GN-45, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

Deadline for submission of proposals is October 1, 1984.

Cleveland Edition

The Cleveland Edition, an alternative weekly starting in Cleveland, is seeking free-lance writers for a weekly column emphasizing the feminist point of view. The column, "Our Lives," is dedicated to the examination of what it is to evolve human in the Eighties and what it means to be a woman or man today: the complexities of our relationships, the redefinitions of our roles, the politics of our individuality and equality. The format will range from the serious to the satiric, from the personal essay to documented reporting, to the Q/A interview or profile.

Interested persons should contact Rikki Santer, managing editor of the Edition at (216) 579-6071 or at Playhouse Square, 1314 Huron Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

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Comments and announcements from our readers are welcome; deadline for copy is the fifth of the preceding month.

Correspondence should be directed to:

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207 Dulles Hall
230 West 17th Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210

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